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TAGS: OVIP HENRY A. KISSINGER

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FOR COVEY FROM S/PRS

HEREWITH FULL TEXT OF EVANS AND NOVAK PIECE

NATO FEARS OF SOVIET SUPERIORITY

SUDDEN EUROPEAN WORRY ABOUT THE WARSAW PACT'S PHENOMENAL
GROWTH IN CONVENTIONAL MILITARY POWER HAS GIVEN JIMMY
CARTER MORE LEVERAGE TO STRENGTHEN NATO THAN ANY PRESIDENT
SINCE JOHN F. KENNEDY.

WESTERN EUROPE'S MOOD OF CONCERN BORDERING ON OUTRIGHT
FEAR OVER GROWING SOVIET SUPERIORITY IN CENTRAL EUROPE
IS SHOWN IN NATO'S ABOUT-FACE ON A PROPOSED MULTI-BILLION-
DOLLAR AIRBORNE RADAR WARNING SYSTEM. PENTAGON OFFICIALS
NOW BELIEVE THAT THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION
(NATO) WILL APPROVE THE SYSTEM EARLY IN 1977. THE MAJOR
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REASONS FOR THE SHIFT: FEAR OF SURPRISE ATTACK.

EVEN MORE SIGNIFICANT THAN NATO'S CHANGING ITS MIND ON
THE SOPHISTICATED WARNING SYSTEM, EUROPEAN POLITICAL
LEADERS ARE GOING PUBLIC TO EXPRESS ALARM OVER GAPING

HOLES IN NATO'S DEFENSE.

THE MOST POINTED QUESTIONS ABOUT NATO'S VULNERABILITY ARE BEING RAISED BY HENRI SIMONET, A BRILLIANT POLITICIAN IN BELGIUM'S SOCIALIST PARTY (SCARCELY A HOTBED OF COLD WARRIORS). SIMONET, OUTGOING VICE PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY COMMISSION AND FORMER ECONOMICS MINISTER OF BELGIUM, IS POINTING UP SOME OF THE THORNIEST DEFENSE PROBLEMS EVER MENTIONED BY ANY EUROPEAN SOCIALIST, AS FOLLOWS:

COMMUNIST MILITARY IMPROVEMENTS IN CENTRAL EUROPE ARE DEVELOPING A MASSIVE OFFENSIVE FORCE; THE STRATEGIC CONCEPT ON WHICH NATO WAS FOUNDED HAS BECOME OBSOLETE BECAUSE THE SOVIET UNION HAS REACHED AT LEAST NUCLEAR PARITY WITH THE WEST; DEMANDS BY SEN. SAM NUNN (D-GA) AND SEN. DEWEY BARTLETT (R-OKLA) FOR FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES IN NATO STRATEGY ARE "ONLY A BEGINNING" OF A NEW AMERICAN DESIGN FOR NATO THAT EUROPE MUST BE PREPARED TO SUPPORT.

SIMONET'S QUESTIONING OF NATO TODAY WILL APPEAR AS A LENGTHY PREFACE TO A METICULOUSLY RESEARCHED, DEEPLY CRITICAL BOOK BY BELGIAN BRIG. GEN. ROBERT CLOSE, FORMER DIRECTOR OF STUDIES AT THE NATO DEFENSE COLLEGE IN ROME.

A SHORT VERSION OF CLOSE'S STILL UNPUBLISHED BOOK APPEARED EARLIER THIS YEAR AS A MEMOIR WITH A GRIM WARNING. HE SUGGESTED THE RIPENING POSSIBILITY OF A SOVIET SURPRISE ATTACK AGAINST NATO SWEEPING ACROSS THE NORTHERN PLAINS OF GERMANY TO THE RHINE IN A MATTER OF HOURS.

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THAT POSSIBILITY IS PUBLICLY DISCOUNTED BY GEN. ALEXANDER HAIG, NATO SUPREME COMMANDER. BUT IT IS GAINING AFFIRMATION AMONG MANY STUDENTS OF SOVIET MILITARY POTENTIAL, SOME OF WHOM CLAIM THAT HAIG HIMSELF PRIVATELY AGREES BUT IS UNWILLING TO SAY SO PUBLICLY.

CLOSE'S BOOK, UPDATING AND FLESHING OUT HIS EARLIEST MEMOIR, WILL PORTRAY A DARKLY PESSIMISTIC FUTURE FOR THE WEST UNLESS EUROPEAN MEMBERS OF NATO CEASE WHAT HE CALLS "THE DEMOBILIZATION OF THE MINDS." BY THAT HE MEANS WESTERN EUROPE'S REFUSAL TO FACE THE FACTS OF GROWING SOVIET SUPERIORITY.

THAT SUPERIORITY IS SPELLED OUT BY CLOSE IN FRIGHTENING DETAIL. HE ESTIMATES A WARSAW PACT GRAND TOTAL OF 62 SATELLITE DIVISIONS AND 160 SOVIET DIVISIONS AND CLAIMS EACH SOVIET DIVISION IS EITHER MECHANIZED OR AIRBORNE.

ALTHOUGH PENTAGON AIDES TOLD US THE GENERAL SLIGHTLY EXAGGERATED HIS ESTIMATE OF WARSAW PACT STRENGTH, THERE IS NO DOUBT ABOUT THE RELATIVE WEAKNESS OF NATO FORCES.

HE REVEALS THE WARSAW PACT COULD PUT 39 DIVISIONS INTO THE FRONT LINE "IN A FIRST OFFENSIVE WAVE" WITHIN 48 HOURS; A SECOND WAVE OF 60 SOVIET DIVISIONS AUGMENTED BY MAJOR CZECH FORCES COULD BE IN ACTION WITHIN SIX DAYS. NATO'S DEFENSIVE FORCE, CONCLUDES CLOSE, WOULD BE 22 DIVISIONS, RELYING ON PRINCIPAL REINFORCEMENTS FROM BRITISH AND US MANPOWER POOLS FAR FROM THE SCENE OF ACTION.

THIS COMPORTS WITH FINDINGS BY NUNN AND BARTLETT AFTER PERSONAL INSPECTION. THEY CONCLUDED IT WOULD TAKE FAR LONGER THAN SIX DAYS - PERHAPS EVEN TWO TO THREE WEEKS - TO PUT THE FULL BRITISH COMPLEMENT OF 139,000 TROOPS AT THE RHINE AND TO AIRLIFT US REINFORCEMENTS ACROSS THE UNCLASSIFIED

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ATLANTIC.

IF THE PENTAGON IS CORRECT IN BELIEVING THAT NATO WILL APPROVE THE EXTRAORDINARY COSTLY NEW AIRBORNE WARNING SYSTEM, PRECIOUS TIME WILL BE ADDED TO THE WEST'S SAFETY MARGIN. BUT THAT WILL NOT HAPPEN FOR SEVERAL YEARS.

SIMONET AND CLOSE WANT SOMETHING MORE. IN THE FIRST DRAFT OF HIS PREFACE TO CLOSE'S BOOK, SIMONET SAYS, "ONE MUST, AS A FIRST REQUISITE, CONVINCE PUBLIC OPINION" OF THE DESPERATE NEED TO MODERNIZE AND REINFORCE NATO'S CONVENTIONAL POWER. CONVINCING THE PUBLIC IS ONE OF THE HARDEST TASKS IN A DEMOCRACY, BUT PRESIDENT-ELECT CARTER - IF HE REALLY CARES - MAY FIND THE CASE HAS BEEN HALF MADE FOR HIM BY THE WORRIED EUROPEANS. ROBINSON

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